

## RUSSIA STILL ADVANCES ON LEMBERG AND KOVEL

After Being Checked for Several Weeks  
the Czar's Drives Are Vigorously  
Renewed—Germans Retire for  
Final Stand Before Kovel

By FRANK H. SIMONDS,  
Author of "The Great War."

Five weeks ago, when I reviewed the Russian offensive in these columns, I pointed out that the campaign was approaching a crisis and Austro-German retreat on a wide front was almost inevitable unless the Russians were promptly checked. They were checked with great promptness, and it is only in very recent days that they have been able to get on foot and step forward again. But their success in doing this reproduces the peril of the earlier period and precipitates a new crisis on the East front.

Let us, first of all, look backward over the past five weeks and see what has taken place. About June 20 the Russians stood in this fashion: South of the Pripet Marshes their forces which had broken the Austro-German line along the Styr at Lutsk and taken Dubno were well to the west of this river and advancing on a wide front toward Kovel and Vladimir Volynski; they were distant from these places little more than twenty-five miles. But a few miles north of Lutsk the Austro-Germans still held the west bank of the Styr about Sokul and Kolki and thence north to the Pripet Marshes.

## Five Weeks Ago.

To the south of Lutsk and Dubno the Russians had just reached the old Austrian frontier east of Brody and had already been held up there. Their position from Brody to the Pripet was thus a huge salient or bulge, penetrating for forty or fifty miles into the old Austro-German

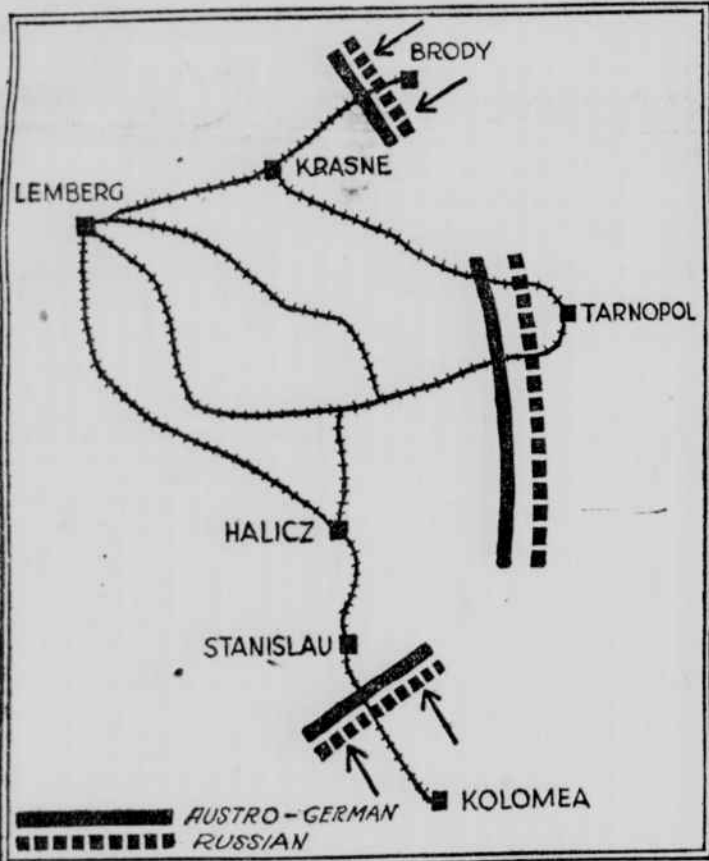
crossed the Galician frontier and are in possession of the town of Kolomea, with its important railroads; have cut the Lemberg-Budapest railroad south of Stanislaw at Delatyn and sent cavalry forces up this line into the Jablonica pass, as they have sent other cavalry into the Bukovina passes leading into Transylvania, beyond the Carpathians.

Substantially all of this progress was made several weeks ago, and a flood in the Dniester compelled a suspension of operations for some days. But recently we have been told by Petrograd that the operation has been resumed and the Russians are pressing northwest toward Stanislaw, which is close at hand, and aiming at Lemberg, which is north and west.

## The Lemberg Threat.

Roughly speaking, then, the situation in the southern half of the Eastern front has been at all times a threat at Lemberg, created by two Russian armies, one in the north and one in the south, moving around the flanks and striking at the rear of the main Austro-German army, which is defending the Lemberg region along the Strypa.

But this situation has only developed slowly. Five weeks ago the Russian operations in the north were brought to a complete standstill and the Russians were compelled to retreat at some points by the great German counter-offensive coming east and south out of Kovel and striking at the Russian flank along the



The drive at Lemberg.

front. But they were themselves exposed to a flank attack from Kovel southwestward along the Kovel-Rowno railroad, and it was already becoming apparent that the Germans were pouring new troops south from their whole Eastern front to attack the exposed flank of the Russians along the Styr north of the Kovel-Rowno railroad and about Sokul and Kolki.

If this German answer to the Russian offensive were successful, then the position of the Russians further west and approaching Kovel and Vladimir Volynski would be perilous in the extreme, and these troops would be threatened with envelopment and capture by the German troops in their rear moving down the Styr from Sokul to Lutsk. The whole of the following month was to be occupied by the German and Russian conflict in this sector and by the Russian parrying of the German counter-thrust.

## Russians Held at Tarnopol.

Southward from Brody to the Dniester River near Horodenka the two armies faced each other on lines that had not varied much since the Russians began their attack and have not changed materially since. The Austro-Germans stood facing Tarnopol and behind the Strypa River, on the considerable hills that line its western bank. Russian attempts to advance on this sector came to nothing and were very soon abandoned. Substantially the Austro-German position here has endured the attack with little recoil up to the present moment, when, because of developments elsewhere, its position has become perilous, as I will demonstrate in a moment.

Going southward again and crossing the Dniester, the change in the situation in five weeks is striking. At that time the Russians had just taken Czernowicz and penetrated into Bukovina. Today they occupy all of Bukovina, have

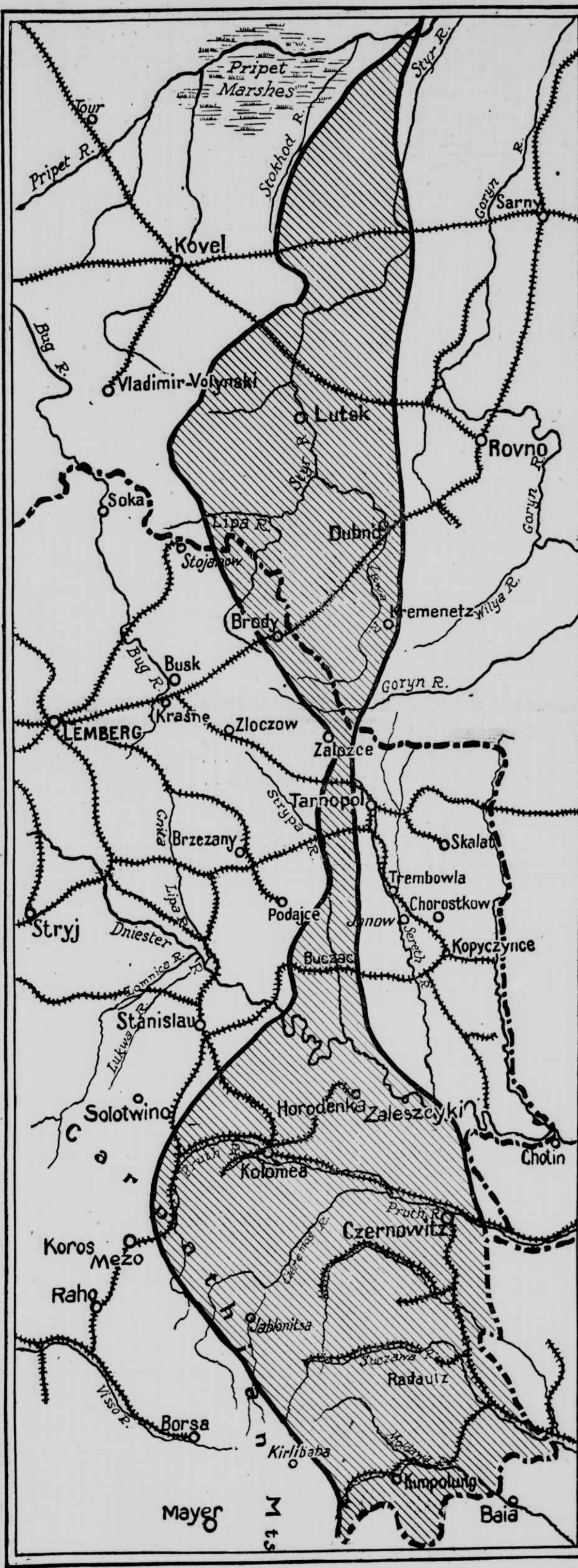
Styr toward Kolki and Sokul.

Menaced by this flanking attack, the Russians passed to the defensive and we had two weeks of confused fighting along the Styr and due north of Lutsk. But at the end of that time the German counter-thrust seems to have lost its force. Then the Russians again passed to the offensive and Berlin and Vienna conceded a considerable retirement of their armies. This retreat brought them back behind the Stachod River, which flows north parallel to the Styr and some twenty miles to the west. Along the whole front the line straightened out and the Russians' position was no longer a salient, but a straight line, its northern end resting upon the Pripet Marshes.

## The New Advance.

Again we had a considerable pause. Behind the Stachod the Germans had prepared lines of very great strength and Russian attacks were steadily beaten back. For two weeks the line of the Stachod held and there were many evidences that the Russians had determined to abandon their offensive in this region and carry it further south. But within the last two days there has been a new Russian advance across the Stachod and little more than twenty miles east of Kovel. Again, after some delay, the Russians seem to have overcome the German resistance and are once more going forward toward Kovel. They have now no natural obstacle between them and Kovel until they actually reach the town, which is on the Turja River, a stream which runs parallel to the Stachod and the Styr and also enters the Pripet Marshes. Presumably, although it is too soon to be sure yet, the Germans are now planning to draw back behind the Turja, as they did behind the Stachod, and there make their final defence of

## THE EASTERN FRONT.



The shaded territory shows the Russian gain.

the vitally important railroad junction of Kovel.

Meantime, the Russians, when they were temporarily checked at the Stachod, turned their attention to the south and began to push forward masses of troops

up the valley of the Styr on both banks until they reached the confluence of the Styr and the Lipa, not far from the old Austrian frontier. Here the Austro-German armies made a stand and were heavily defeated and driven across the Lipa,

and back from the hills to the south of the stream. Still pressing on, the Russians entered Galicia and joined hands with those other Russians who had been held up before Brody for many weeks. With little delay the Austrians, threatened

in flank and rear, were turned out of Brody and are now falling back at full speed along the Lemberg-Brody-Rowno railroad, and are at least ten miles west of Brody already, which means they are less than forty miles east of Lemberg.

Now the present situation is disclosed in this article. The Russian armies which have come down the Styr and along the Rowno-Lemberg railroad are actually far nearer to Lemberg than the Austro-German armies which have been standing so successfully before Tarnopol and behind the Strypa River. These armies are nearly eighty miles due east of Lemberg; the Russian armies west of Brody are less than fifty. Unless the Russian armies are now promptly checked the Austro-German armies will have to retreat very shortly to avoid being enveloped and compelled to surrender. The Russian army coming out of Brody already threatens to intervene between Lemberg and these Austro-German armies.

Meantime, away to the south, as has been mentioned, the Russian armies in this region are approaching Stanislaw and aiming at Lemberg along the Lemberg-Czernowicz railroad. Precisely as the Brody army is endeavoring to get between the Austro-German forces on the Strypa and Lemberg, coming down from the north, this Russian army is seeking to cut in between the same German army and Lemberg from the south. North and south these Russian armies are already further west than the German and Austrian forces on the Strypa, while the Brody force is actually nearer Lemberg.

What we have here, then, is an operation familiarly described as that of a pair of pincers, the pincers being the two Russian armies west of Brody and south of Stanislaw. They are closing on the Austro-German army along the Strypa, and if they are not checked the Austro-German army will soon have to draw back to escape the jaws of the pincers. If it lingers too long it may be threatened with disaster; if it retreats it will have to surrender a very considerable amount of territory and take its new stand not more than thirty miles from Lemberg, always provided that it can make good its retreat and stand on a new line. Both of these things are wholly probable, but by no means certain.

If the Austro-Germans are compelled to withdraw they have an admirable defensive position behind the Bug and Gnila Lipa rivers, which rise not far from the Lemberg-Rowno railroad, the one going north into the Vistula near Warsaw, the other south into the Dniester near Halicz. Roughly speaking, this line would start at Halicz on the Dniester, follow the Gnila Lipa north, cross the railroads and go northwestward behind the Bug until that stream approaches the head waters of the Turja; then it would go due north behind the Turja and its affluent, the Lupa, through Vladimir Volynski to the Pripet Marshes.

So far, then, the Austro-Germans, if they were able to draw back to the Bug, would suffer no grave loss. But their situation would still be menaced by the Russian army moving south of the Dniester and between that river and the Carpathians. If this army were able to keep on it would cut the railroads crossing the Carpathians between Lemberg and Hungary, and it would also threaten the flank of the armies standing behind the Gnila Lipa and before Lemberg. Two years ago it was precisely this threat which compelled the Austrians to abandon Lemberg after their great defeat and rout on the line of the Bug and the Gnila Lipa.

The Russians will presently take Lemberg unless both of their great flank operations, the one from Brody southwest, the other from the front of Stanislaw northwest, are beaten down and brought to a halt. Temporarily the floods of the Dniester checked the southern thrust, the German attack from Kovel compelled the relinquishment of the northern. But both have been resumed and in addition the Russians still further to the north are again advancing toward Kovel and its capture is a possibility, although it is more likely that the Austro-Germans will stand on prepared lines behind the Turja, as they did behind the Styr and the Stachod and that the Russians will be held up at least temporarily.

The fall of Kovel will compel the Germans to carry their Eastern front behind the Bug from the Austrian frontier north to Brest-Litovsk and would mean a retirement of nearly two hundred miles from Pinsk, where they now stand. It would probably mean the retirement from a greater portion of all the Russian territory now occupied, aside from Poland, but such a retirement would bring the Germans behind the admirable defensive lines of the

## The Russian Pincers That Threaten to Close on the Enemy Along the Strypa—Lemberg's Peril and the Results to Date

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Bug and the Niemen, it would shorten their lines by at least a third and give them far better railroad resources. Such a general retirement is by no means to be expected in the immediate future, at the very least. But if it comes subsequently it must be viewed from its political rather than its military angle to appreciate its meaning. On the military side it will give Germany a shorter and better line to hold, but on the moral side it will deprive her of half of all the Russian territory she holds and indicate the decline in German resources.

## Russia's Winnings.

Briefly now, what have been the results of nearly two months of Russian activity in the East? Taking the Russian statement the Czar's forces have already captured over 350,000 Austro-German troops. Our own American consular agents in Russia, who have looked after Russian prisoners, agree that the Russian figures have been uniformly trustworthy in the matter of prisoners, therefore the latest may be accepted, despite natural Austrian denials. The capture of artillery and supplies has been enormous. Moreover all this is going forward steadily and the latest captures point to a new demoralization in Austrian ranks.

In addition not less than 15,000 square miles of territory, including all of Bukovina, have been reconquered. This is an area but little smaller than the combined area of French and Belgian districts occupied by the Germans. As to the moral effect upon the world of the Russian success, it cannot be exaggerated because it demonstrates that the reverses of a year ago were only temporary and that Russia has found herself again, succeeded in transforming herself industrially and managed to equip new millions, behind which, as the world knows, there are still other millions. In men Russia was always the richest of the Allies, but the real problem of the war was whether she could supply the men with guns and ammunition. She has solved the problem.

## The Weakness of Austria.

Conversely the Russian success has disclosed Austrian weakness; the consequences of the Austrian defeats in recent weeks have been nearly as costly as those of her earlier disasters about Lemberg, which brought German effort in the West to a standstill after the Marne. These weaknesses in the Austrian military establishment have again set on foot rumors of a separate peace with Austria, but there seems no real foundation for such rumors as yet. One thing the Russian success has done, and that is to terminate the Austrian menace to Italy. The Austrian campaign in the Trentino has been abandoned and the troops concentrated there have in large numbers been sent to support the beaten troops in Galicia.

An odd detail is the report from Sofia of the dispatch of Turkish troops to Galicia to save the Austrians. This certainly is an ironical turn of fate that the proud Hapsburg Empire should be compelled to ask the Osmanli for aid. Sobieski, who saved Vienna from the Osmanli, might well turn in his grave at this new alignment of Europe.

But the recall of Austrian and German troops from the Balkans must presently have a very considerable bearing upon conditions there. Unquestionably if the Bulgarians find themselves left to face the British, French and Serbs unsupported, they will question the advantage of their latest alliance, and a single defeat, far from improbable, since the Bulgarians will be outnumbered and outgunned, may change the whole situation in the Near East.

## Peace via Salonica.

After all there can be no hope of peace in Europe until the Allies are completely exhausted or have succeeded in cutting the German line to Constantinople and restoring and enlarging Serbia, to serve as a bulwark against Austro-German expansion toward the Near East. Russia, Britain and France, and for that matter Italy, have every reason to desire the complete breaking of the alliance between the Sultan and the Hohenzollern, which is a menace to their colonies and a constant peril to the peace of their territories inhabited by millions of Moslems.

Russian advance from Erzerum is already threatening the Turk in Asia Minor; a new campaign from Salonica, where all the circumstances recall Wellington's famous stand at Torres Vedras and subsequent successful advance to Madrid and Toulouse, seems assured and this campaign, if successful, may contribute more than either of the present great drives to bring about peace, since it will deprive Germany of the only considerable prize of the war for her; it will, in fact, eliminate that place in the sun so dear to German hearts and so completely achieved by Mackensen's great Balkan campaign last year.